

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER EMPOWERMENT AT DARUNA RATCHABURI WITAED SUKSA SCHOOL IN RATCHABURI PROVINCE, THAILAND

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment based on the perceptions of teachers at the school of Daruna Ratchaburi Witaed Suksa in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. Based on two variables, there were three objectives: (1) To identify the level of teachers' perceptions on Transformational School Leadership, (2) To examine the level of teachers' perceptions on Teacher Empowerment, (3) To determine if there were any significant relationship between two of those variables. In this study, the quantitative methodology was used along with 106 participant teachers at the school of DRWS. In research findings, it showed the overall scores of Transformational School Leadership and Six Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment got high level in the perceptions of teachers. Then, the positive significant correlation had occurred between Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment. Considering those results, both of those variables were moving in the same direction. It, thus, could be said the more Transformational School Leadership performed in the school, the greater teachers felt empowerment in their work life. Thus, it was recommended that in order to apply on the concept of beginning from school principal to teacher empowering, through which the feeling of empowerment of the teachers, would flow to student empowerment (Short & Reinhard, 1992), it required to conduct the relationship of Transformational School Leadership, Teacher Empowerment, and Student Achievement in both at the private and public educational sectors, in Thailand.

Keywords: Transformational School Leadership; Empowerment; Six Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment; DRWS.

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Introduction

As simple as the understanding of leadership was all about direction and influence, effected on the ability of students learning and school organization, offered a catalyst for unleashing the existed potential capacities in the organization (Leithwood & Janze, 2006). Then, the effective school leadership based on the way leaders practice the power and abilities to apply to the benefits of both teachers and school. Though the Transformational School Leadership was an indirect influence on students' achievement, it directly affected teachers' inner situations and manners. (Elmazi, 2018).

Moreover, teacher empowerment was the instrument to boost trust of teachers among them. At the same time, teacher education was the crucial issue and debatable matter for discussion nowadays, due to the tasks of the teacher having to prepare for students' present and future workplace. With the suggestions on teacher empowerment and professional development were needed, there was a serious call for educational reform. Regarding with the Transformational Leadership in Thailand, Pootrakul (2015) found that as a vital aspect for quality education, it made high significant correlation with school achievements. Also, that leadership could raise the aspiration of the institute and promote the productivity of the school organization. As the demand for 21st-century education, Thai education system had adjusted from the traditional style that did not support well to that paradigm shift. Likewise, the teachers themselves required to adjust to become more professional, competent, keen, and interest in the efficiency and effectiveness of the school. Thus, the Ministry of Thai education had provided for teacher training colleges, universities for faculties education as emphasizing on the learner, and offered learner-centered teaching method, specialized education, guideline for general education, direction for school administration and practicum for teaching experiences. Moreover, two types of the program were offered such as one-year certificate program and five-year bachelor's degree program. Then, depending on their successful completion program, the license for teaching was conferred.

In 2010, the Daruna Ratchaburi Witaed Suksa School (DRWS) was established in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. The school organized the English language project with the help of foreign teachers and a few native speakers. By the 21st century education, the school set up the installed computer with internet in every classroom, created students' library and visual-audio room for English listening and reading skills, and equipped school infrastructure with hygiene and cleanliness. Then, the school of the leaders in DRWS encouraged the teachers to be flexible and initiative in teaching to obtain more better benefit to the national objectives of quality education.

Then, to foster the spirit of unity in the school community and teamwork, the teachers were inspired to share ideas and materials and to respect the opinions of others. Also, the DRWS school focused on teacher empowerment and their professional development by giving teacher training programs, workshops, and promotion for the development of their capacities (DRWS Teachers' handbook, (n.d.), Pg. 8-9). According to the demand of school effectiveness, DRWS school set up the school organizational goal, such as ***Empowering the next generation to advance***. As the next generation might be referred to students, and to empower them, it should be recognized that teachers were necessarily empowered by school leaders and teachers themselves. Therefore, this research was carried out based on the perceptions of teachers at the school of DRWS, Ratchaburi province, Thailand.

Research Objectives

The following three research objectives are set up based on the statement of the problem of this study.

- To identify the teacher perceptions of Transformational School Leadership at the school of DRWS.
- To examine the teacher perceptions of Teacher Empowerment at the school of DRWS.
- To determine if there is any relationship between Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment at the school of DRWS.

Significance of the Study

This research explored the relationship between Transformational School Leadership and School Empowerment, and the outcome of this research which was aimed at the school goal for the empowering of the next generation. The researcher expected that this research would be a benefit for three groups: School leaders and department heads, the teachers and their professional development, and also future researchers.

To promote the good relationship among school leaders, teachers, and staff, and to reach the goal of the school as well as school achievement, this study would be considered beneficial. As observing on perceptions of teachers and the results of findings, the school leaders could support the prerequisites of teachers, students, and school achievement. In return, the understanding and perspectives of teachers on school leadership and empowerment would then be enhanced and balanced in line with the current situation. Consequently, those knowledges of teachers would be effective in the students' achievement and empower them in advance. As for the future researchers, they could extend further to their knowledge in the field of Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment.

Literature Review

In literature review, the researcher, mainly, focused on two theories and their related literature, supportive studies from previous researches, and context of those studies. Here are five specific aspects were included in this literature review.

1. Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1999) of which Leithwood Theory of Transformational School Leadership (Leithwood & Janzi, 2006), the related literature of that leadership and Teacher Empowerment (Elmazi, 2018), then, previous research of Transformational School Leadership (Rutledge, 2010; Baggett, 2015)
2. Concept of Empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000) which consisted of Teachers Empowerment (Short & Rinehart, 1992) the interrelated of Teacher Empowerment and Empowerment Theory of Zimmerman, Six Main Dimensions of Teacher Empowerment, then, previous research on Teacher Empowerment (Watts, 2009; Hammond, 2017).
3. The education system for private bilingual English program schools, in Thailand.
4. The brief background of the selected school of Daruna Ratchaburi Witaed Suksa School.
5. Presenting the summary of the reviewed literature.

Above all, it was presented the important roles of school leadership and teacher empowerment, and the deeds of school leadership in supervision and support to teacher education.

Conceptual Framework

The main purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment at the school of DRWS. Before finding that, the researcher was to identify the levels of teachers' perception towards Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment. Thus, this study was founded on two main variables, Transformational School Leadership which consisted of four dimensions and Teacher Empowerment with Six dimensions. Figure1. illustrated the conceptual framework of two variables and the process of this study.

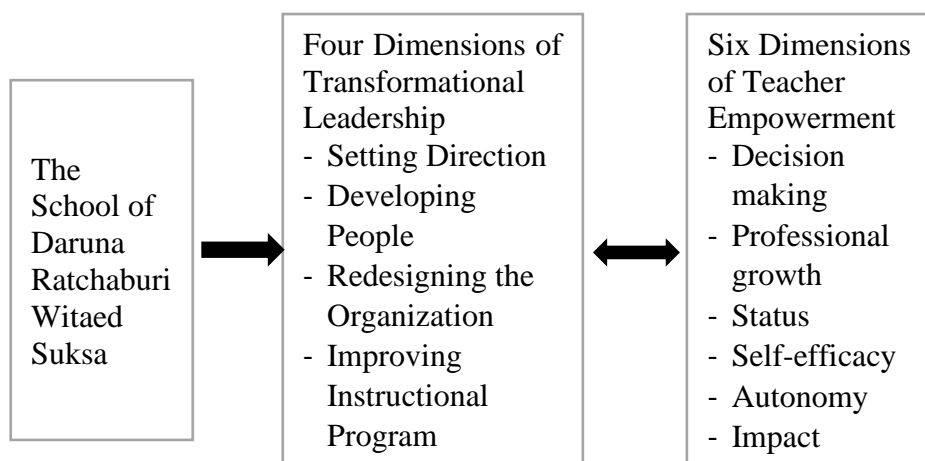


Figure 1. *The Framework of this Study*

Research Methodology

This research was designed to identify the demographic factors of teachers and to examine the level of teachers' perceptions towards Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment, then to determine the relationship between two of those variables. In the process of the study, the research utilized quantity research methodology and three research instruments; the questionnaires for teachers' demographic profiles, then questionnaires for Educational Transformational Leadership Survey (ETLS) adapted from the study of Baggett (2015), and Teacher Participant Empowerment Scales (SPES) which from Hammond (2017). To identify the level of teachers' perceptions, Mean and Standard Deviation were used, but the finding of a relationship between two variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and descriptive analysis method were applied in this study.

In order to accomplish the research, the researcher requested the permission from the head of the Ratchaburi Diocese and the director of the school. In addition, the researcher invited the teachers who had been working in the school to cooperate in that relationship study. Thus, the population was (106) full-time teachers of the academic years of 2019-2020, in the scope of teacher perceptions of Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment at the school of Daruna Ratchaburi Witaed Suksa, in Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. To distribute the data to all the teachers, all questionnaires were translated from the English version to the Thai version so that most of the Thai teachers could understand and to get to the point that the questionnaires mentioned.

Findings

Research Objective One

Research objective one was to examine the level of teacher perceptions of Transformational School Leadership consisted of 20 items under the four dimensions.

Table 1. *The Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Transformational leadership (no=106)*

Four Dimensions of Transformational Leadership	M	SD	Interpretation
Setting Direction	4.30	.538	High
Developing People	4.38	.540	High
Redesigning the Organization	4.35	.573	High
Improving the Instructional Program	4.38	.529	High
Total	4.35	.487	High

The summary of the total result of transformational leadership showed the overall means score of (4.35) at a high level of teacher perception towards transformational school leadership. Among four dimensions of transformational leadership, the lowest score was the Setting Direction dimension with the mean score of (4.31), but showing the highest scores were the dimensions of the Developing People (4.38) and Redesigning the Organization (4.38). According to those results, although the performance of school leaders in the development of schoolteachers and promoting school culture was high, there was still weak in clarification and explanation of the reasons for setting school organizational goal, overall purpose, and expectations for school's improvement in advance.

Research Objective Two

Research objective two was to determine the perceptions of the teacher towards Teacher Empowerment included 38 items in six dimensions.

Table 2. *The Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Teacher Empowerment (no=106)*

Teacher Empowerment	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Decision Making	4.09	.485	High
Professional Growth	4.41	.443	High
Status	4.37	.426	High
Self - Efficacy	4.43	.423	High
Autonomy	4.33	.490	High
Impact	4.30	.472	High
Total	4.32	.400	High

The table indicated that the overall score of Teacher Empowerment was 4.32 which was at a high level of teachers' feeling towards empowerment by school leaders in DRWS school. Profoundly, there was the highest score of the dimension of Self-efficacy with the mean score of (4.43). It might be said that the teachers, their self-rating on Self – efficacy skill was the highest among the Six Dimensions. That was a great conviction of teachers on their skills and abilities to raise up the students' learning. According to the theory of empowerment by Zimmerman (2000), it was stated that there was a great concern from people of how they could achieve well to their anticipated goal. As the result, though teachers' Self-efficacy skill was high, the perceptions on the Decision-making dimension was low at the mean score of (4.09).

Research Objective Three

Research objective three was the finding about the relationship between two variables of Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment. To know the relationship between these two selected variables, the researcher used the software program to analyze the data and Pearson correlation method.

Table 3. *Pearson Correlation between the level of teachers' perceptions towards Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment (n=106)*

		Teachers Empowerment	Conclusion
Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.773**	There was a significant relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the result, (r) value was 0.773** and the significant correlation was at 0.01 level that smaller than .05. It shows there was a significant relationship between two variables of Transformational School Leadership and Teacher Empowerment. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis (Ho) and accepted the research hypothesis (Ha) for this study. As mentioned in the statistical standard interpretation, the significant correlation identifies as a positive relationship between two variables, based on the (r) value (0.773**) not (-0.773**). Thus, it could be interpreted that as the Transformational Leadership variable was increased, the variable of Teacher Empowerment also increased since these two variables were moved in the same direction.

Discussion

The Objective One (Teacher Perceptions of Transformational Leadership at the School of DRWS)

It was found that among four dimensions, the lowest score was the Setting Dimension at (4.31) in which four questions were composed under two theoretical concepts. In that Setting Directions, *give staff a sense of overall purpose* was low, indicating the leaders giving a sense of school goal to the teachers was weak. Yet, in previous research from the work of Rutledge (2010) found that the Transformational Leadership affected on the school academic optimism, and also presented a significant relationship. Moreover, he stated that Transformational Leadership would often raise to school's visions, expectations, and goals in such meetings, announcements, memos, and acknowledgments. But this current research found different from the study of Rutledge. Therefore, the researcher recommended that in order to enhance the school's Setting Direction, the school leaders needed to act more in identifying school vision, sharing a common goal, and clarifying reasons for school's improvement actions in the school. Moreover, the leaders may invite teachers to be part of the planning process or making a strategy for school so that they will be more understood in building school's organizational goals and the specific needs for change in school. Regarding the lowest score, it was concerned that as a private school, the school leaders can communicate the information related to the school's situation and achievement to the teacher. Also, the leaders can use technology for the intention of communication, clarification for the reason of setting organizational goals, purpose and school initiative work.

Then, from the result of Leithwood's and Janzi (2006) study, he claimed that the school leaders were having the greatest influence on teachers, apparently in the area of Developing People practices, such as school's leadership which was reported as having effects on inner situations of teachers and their behaviors. Since the highest scores were Developing People in school and the actions of leaders in Improving Instruction Program, it had better to retain such good relationship between them. Thus, through this study, the school leaders are able to know the direct effect of leadership on teachers' empowerment or their development, for the overall mean score are not much different, transformational school leadership (4.35) and teacher empowerment (4.32) in a high level of rating in two variables. Since the relationship between them were also positively significant, it is thus considered that however school leaders behave in school or outside, these were in turn being mirrored for teachers.

Besides, the study of Ross (1999) revealed that leaders' expectations on teachers' activities which was under the dimension of Setting Directions was strongly correlated with student achievement. He recommended for the progressing of teachers' self – efficacy, the behaviors of transformational leadership remained as a key factor. According to the current study findings, it is supported by the study of Ross, it might say that since the dimension of Self – efficacy score of (4.43) was the highest in teacher empowerment. Therefore, it could be said that Daruna Ratchaburi school leaders and their leadership which supported the teachers Self – efficacy was a main aspect of the school. Because of that high teacher Self- efficacy, the school organization was accredited just as student-centered learning-based. And it was recognized that school leaders' behaviors are as an essential to attain student's achievement and foster the teachers as empowerment, for *helping kids become independent learner* item was at a very high level of (4.60) in the dimension of Self – efficacy.

The Objective Two (Teachers' Perception of Teacher Empowerment at the School of DRWS)

The total mean score of Teacher Empowerment was given of (4.32) as being interpreted at a high level. Among six dimensions of in that variable, the lowest score was the dimension of Decision making. Thus, it could not say there was lack of teachers' participation in decision making, but it merely showed weak in budget decisions and asking advice from the colleagues and principal, especially, the sub-items of *I am involved in school budget decision* (3.88) and *Principal, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice* (3.89). As Short and Rinehart (1992) described that the partaking of teachers in critical decision making can affect directly on their work-life, then, by providing teachers with a specific role to make the decision, it was to gain the prospect to control their work-life as well. This study had given the lowest mean score in Decision Making. But it remained at the high level of teachers' rating (4.09), in the range of interpretation standard. The work of Banker (2017) suggested that the principal was required to continue in encouraging and sharing to the teachers, precisely the skill of Decision making, Professional Growth and Impact to solve the concern and set up the goal in both school and district level. Therefore, the teachers at the school of DRWS should practice open-handed, positive mindsets, and analytical skills so that they can make decisions either for an individual or an organization. More so, if the school leaders can manage time for short program that can foster teachers' empowerment psychologically or organizationally, they may feel more empowered from the school, and then it can flow toward the students and in return can empower them.

Short and Rinehart (1992) described self – efficacy of teachers as their attempts to say they had abilities and skills to aid the students' success and precisely the achievement of their goals. When the researcher considered the variable of Teacher Empowerment in this study, it was found that the rate of the perceptions of teachers at the dimensions of Self-Efficacy was shown at the highest rating of (4.43). Thus, the data result indicated that the school of DRWS presented development of teachers' mental skills and their acquisition of knowledge was at a high level of supporting the students' needs. Therefore, according to the theory of Empowerment by Zimmerman (2000), it might be said the teachers in DRWS have received the psychological or individual empowerment by school leaders or principal. Then, the results of (Kenny, 2003) also indicated that the perception of new teachers and experienced teachers rated highest scores on Self-Efficacy, but the lowest scores on Autonomy, with the rating of experienced teachers slightly increased. When the researcher compared with the study of Kenny (2003) and current study, it found that on the general information of teachers at the school of DRWS, the majority of teachers with teaching experience of one to ten years, they displayed the dimensions of Self – Efficacy (4.43), and Autonomy (4.33) in the high level of perceptions. Teacher perceptions of Self-efficacy skill were higher than the perceptions of Autonomy. It could then be assumed that having self-efficacy skill was followed by autonomy in the perceptions of teacher at the school of DRWS.

Then, the research of Watt (2009) found that the relationship between three variables of the scale of School Participants Empowerment Scale, Mindfulness scale, and Enabling school's culture, have not shown the significant difference, except the subscale of School Participants Empowerment, the Professional Growth, Self-Efficacy, and Impact which showed significance by regression analysis. In this study of finding, the second-highest scores of Teacher Empowerment were Professional Growth; especially, the items of *teachers having opportunities to work together*, or acquiring the collaboration with each other in school which attained a very high level of rating. Because of that result, it may determine DRWS school stands as an empowering school organization and confirms the existence of organizational empowerment by school leaders and principal through their offering opportunities to teachers to gain personal skills and to grow in their professional development.

The Objective Three (Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment)

The correlation research between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Empowerment based on the perceptions of teachers at the school of Daruna Ratchaburi Witaed Suksa, had shown a positive and significant relationship

with (r) value .773** and correlation significant level of .01 which is smaller than .05 level. Then, based on the perceptions of teachers at DRWS school, both variables of overall scores had shown at a high level of rating. At the same time, in this study, Transformational School Leadership and Teachers Empowerment are harmoniously increased, as both are moving toward the same direction. According to the data analysis and rating of teachers, it was able to assume that the teachers at the school of DRWS convinced themselves of being empowered by school leaders and principal, as well as acknowledged that leaders had been practicing the style of Transformational School Leadership. Therefore, the more school leadership does things, such as giving the directions for school setting, enhancing teachers' development in an individual or organization, encouraging to build healthy school culture and collaboration, and providing pedagogical needs in school, the more teachers feel they attained psychological empowerment and organizational empowerment, as the four dimensions of teachers' empowerment are included and fell in such empowerment.

According to this study, the findings showed as a strong positive relationship at the correlation significant level .01. It can be defined as if the school leaders and teachers have embraced a good relationship. Therefore, as the leaders of DRWS, including department heads, they should keep such good relationship with the teachers, create better communication among them, give supports to what teachers' needs in social, mental, pedagogical, and intellectual, which altogether are quite important for the school leaders. Short and Rinehart (1992) stated that the great feeling of teachers' empowerment can effect on empowering students. Therefore, the researcher strongly recommends future researchers to continue the research of relationships with three variables: the school leadership, teacher empowerment, and students' achievements. Based on the findings and having strong relationship, the school of DRWS needs to reach the school's organizational goal, therefore, it is necessary to know whether the Teacher Empowerment and School Leadership are effective on students' achievements or not.

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